

TRUE AMERICAN.

P. B. CONN, PUBLISHER
CORNER MARKET AND 4TH

\$2 PER ANNUM
IN ADVANCE

A Weekly Journal, Devoted to American Interests, Literature, Science, and General Intelligence.

Z. RAGAN, Editor and Proprietor.

STEUBENVILLE, OHIO, WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 29, 1855.

VOLUME I.—NUMBER 34.

Select Tale.

[From the Pioneer.]
FACTS—NOT FICTION.
A TALE OF THE SOUTH-WEST.
BY MRS. S. A. DOWNER.

[CONCLUDED.]

From her earliest infancy she had breathed only an atmosphere of kindness, while every luxury or wish that she could supply had been hers. Her being harmonized with the affluence that surrounded her, freed from the temptations that follow wealth, as others of a different nature attend want and misery. There are some rich, genial natures, which prosper only to ripen and perfect, where gratitude leads to devotion and good works, freely imparting what has been so bountifully bestowed; and such a nature was Emma's. A sense of her own happiness made her considerate of the happiness of others; and often she asked herself the question, why it was that she should be so much more favored, than thousands equally deserving? Her inward consciousness was aroused, her perceptions of the high purposes of life were becoming clear. Wealth, with the advantages of leisure, opened before her a walk of more active beneficence for the future. She might not accomplish much, but that little she would undertake; and as she made this resolve, her bosom swelled with an emotion of indescribable joy and pleasure.

She had been standing on a balcony that overlooked an extensive lawn, covered with turf, smooth and green as velvet, and dotted with magnificent trees that quite embowered the noble mansion. In front, in the middle of a flower-bed, a fountain threw high its silvery spray, which dropped into a marble basin, that was surrounded by fragrant flowers. Marble vases containing choice plants were ranged around, while Cape jessamines and lemon-scented verbena filled the air with bloom and fragrance, as the setting sun shed over all a halo of beauty and splendor. As the last rays departed, Emma re-entered the parlor and seated herself at the piano, rattled a lively piece of music. She had a decided genius for music, partly inherited from her mother, who was an accomplished performer. Her touch was brilliant and firm, and as her fingers flew over the keys, her flute-like voice burst out into an airy bird-like strain, that resembled a gush of gladness. An hour or more passed, during which Mrs. Morris had joined her at the instrument, listening with intense delight, or mingling her own sweet voice with that of her happy child. As lights were brought into the drawing-room, Emma turned from the piano.

"What on earth can keep Mr. Selwyn so late?"

"He has come, I fancy; there stands his horse."

Mrs. Morris had scarcely uttered this reply, when a stranger entered the open hall and inquired for Mrs. Selwyn.

He followed the servant into the apartment, and with an awkward attempt at a bow, said he had private business with that lady.

As soon as the waiter's back was turned, he advanced to where she had risen and was standing in wondering amazement. He was of common appearance, the keeper of a cabaret in town, with a manner repulsively familiar, and in a sort of confidential tone, remarked, "If this is Mrs. Selwyn, I think ma'am you had better send and have Mr. Selwyn brought home."

"What do you mean?"

"No offense ma'am; but Mr. Selwyn has been drinking a little too much, and I thought you would like to know it."

She recoiled a few steps, with an air of complete bewilderment.

"There is some mistake, I am sure," said Mrs. Morris, coming forward; "you are mistaken in the person."

"No mistake, ma'am. Mr. Selwyn has been at my house the greater part of the afternoon. He had been drinking when he came, and I have taken the trouble to come over here and tell you out of pure kindness."

The kindness did not seem to be appreciated, as Mrs. Morris with some degree of hauteur in her tone, rejoined, "It cannot be Mr. Selwyn,"—laying a strong emphasis on the Christian name.

"It is the son-in-law of the rich Mrs. Morris, any way. At least I was told so, or I should not have troubled myself about him,"—replied the man with a sullen air.

"Mr. Selwyn left home this morning to call on Mr. Larue, at Richmond; he has returned, as I saw his horse a few moments since."

"Beg your pardon, ma'am. I rode that horse here. It was the greater part of the first recognized; and Mr. Selwyn is now at my house, unable to get home."

His words carried conviction, and it was with a faltering voice Mrs. Morris remarked as she turned away, that she would send a servant with a note.

"Send a note! why ma'am, he is dead."

With a deep groan, Emma sank heavily upon a sofa. She placed her hands before her eyes, as if to shut out some horrid vision. Drunk! She had never in her life seen but one drunken man. It was when she was a child, that a young servant rushed into the house, exclaiming, "O, ma'r! Mr. Jones is whipping Aunt Betsey, just for nothing. Please do come, ma'r, he is cutting her up so!" Child-like, she had flown at the first word of "whipping Aunt Betsey," to the kitchen, where the overseer, with a countenance inflamed with drink and now distorted by passion, was applying the lash to the cook, who for some misdemeanor committed among her pots and kettles, had turned his pet dog out of her domains, and to insure her sense of his intrusion, bestowed on him a hearty kick, as his master happened to pass. The writhings of his victim, the horrid imprecations he uttered, with his disgusting appearance, terrified the child nearly out of her senses. She clung to her father for protection, as he, with righteous indignation, discharged him on the spot. She could never recall this scene without a shudder; even the mention of his name, excited her abhorrence; and as the transaction rose to her mind's eye in connection with Mr. Selwyn, she turned sick at heart, and fell back with a cry of anguish.

A servant entered in answer to the bell. "Harrison," said Mrs. Morris, speaking in a hoarse voice, and articulating with difficulty, "tell Billy to put Mr. Selwyn's horse in the stable—to get up the carriage and accompany this man to his house in town, where Mr. Selwyn is—ill," she gasped out.

As the door closed behind them she sat down by Emma, whom she encircled in her arms. "My poor child, my poor child! what consolation can I offer you?" Emma's grief was speechless. She was too wretched even for tears, and she leant up to that faithful mother's breast with the trust and helplessness of a little child. An hour which appeared an eternity, passed in unutterable agony, when Mrs. Morris, as if suddenly recollecting herself, started up and vehemently rang the bell.

The waiter appeared.

"Harrison, let the house be closed; and send all the servants to bed."

"All of them missis? I'm not sleepy, and you'll want Phillis sure?"

"Not for the world!"

Recalled to a sense of the strangeness of her manner, by the astonishment depicted in his countenance, she added, in a soft tone, "Phillis is old, and must not be deprived of her rest; there is nothing very serious the matter, and Billy can attend to my wishes."

He bowed and withdrew.

Nothing very serious! how the attempt at concealment lowered her in her own eyes! With clasped hands she walked rapidly to and fro in the brilliantly-lighted and elegantly-furnished apartment. She saw nothing of the splendor that surrounded her; but one object was before her—the pallid face of her stricken child. How had this occurred? It was most strange and unaccountable. Mr. Selwyn, since their acquaintance, had been remarkable for his abstinence. Even claret wine, selected for its less stimulating properties, and used throughout the south as an accompaniment to the dinner-table, he had partaken of so sparingly as to draw from Emma the laughing remark that he drank it as though he were afraid of it. It was altogether inexplicable, and how keep the occurrence from the knowledge of servants? But, after all, might it not be a mistake? It was not impossible. She clung to this hope with the strength of despair, but alas! the carriage returned in the silence of night, freighted with its burden of fallen manhood. Her sensations were those of profound contempt, as she beheld him lifted from the carriage, and partly borne into the hall, where, reeling from one piece of furniture to another, he vainly endeavored to maintain an upright position. His look was maudlin, as half recognizing the silent figure before him, he hiccuped out, "Where am I?"

"You are drunk, sir," replied Mrs. Morris in a severe tone. "Billy, take him to his room."

"Where am I?"

"You are drunk, sir," replied Mrs. Morris in a severe tone. "Billy, take him to his room."

"Where am I?"

"You are drunk, sir," replied Mrs. Morris in a severe tone. "Billy, take him to his room."

"Where am I?"

"You are drunk, sir," replied Mrs. Morris in a severe tone. "Billy, take him to his room."

"Where am I?"

"You are drunk, sir," replied Mrs. Morris in a severe tone. "Billy, take him to his room."

"Where am I?"

"You are drunk, sir," replied Mrs. Morris in a severe tone. "Billy, take him to his room."

"Where am I?"

"You are drunk, sir," replied Mrs. Morris in a severe tone. "Billy, take him to his room."

"Where am I?"

All the pride of her nature was aroused by the humiliating spectacle. Indignation, with a sense of betrayed trust, was the feeling that first predominated. Then came softer thoughts;—thoughts of what he had been, of all that she had expected of him, and for the first time, hot, scalding tears ran down her cheek, as she exclaimed, "Oh, God! I would rather have seen him in his coffin!" No sleep visited the eyes of either mother or daughter that night, as weeping or locked in each other's arms, they could only reiterate the question—was this indeed true? It was long before they could bring themselves to believe what had passed a reality, and then, what a fall was there! The blow was absolutely stunning, and sent Emma to a sick bed? It was late on the evening of the second day that Mr. Selwyn, pale and silent, made his appearance in the parlor. Neither reproaches nor explanations took place; a reserve rested on the whole party; yet he constantly followed his wife and mother with beseeching eyes, as he paid those little attentions heretofore so graceful, and which had lent to his manner so great a charm. As time wore on, he all at once became listless, depressed and uneasy. He seemed equally restless, as incapable of exertion, and his wonted pursuits were abandoned. Emma made no attempts to resume the studies this unfortunate occurrence had so rudely broken in upon. Her confidence had received too great a shock easily to recover. It was about a month after the above events, that all at once he was missing. After several days of fruitless inquiries, and when their alarm was at its height, they learned by mere accident that on the day he left home, he was seen on board the steamer which on that day left for New Orleans. He had taken nothing with him, not even a change of clothing, and the motive for his journey was clouded in mystery.

When Mr. Selwyn left home he was merely to go on board the cotton-boat as she lay at the landing, to see what was going forward. He had no particular business, other than to kill that time which now hung heavy on his hands. Among the passengers was a young man he had formerly known at Washington, who was a graduate of the same law school. This gentleman had been on a collecting tour; throughout the south-west for houses in New York and Boston. Their acquaintance was joyfully renewed. They took a glass of wine together; old times and old friends were talked over and discussed; and another glass of wine, and another; until the last bell sounding with the cry of "All on board," he would have followed his friend to the end of the world, and did keep on with him to the city.

They took rooms at the St. Charles Hotel, and during the few days Mr. Selwyn remained, had a gay time of it. After his departure, Mr. Selwyn ordered a supply of wine, with other liquors, to his room. A *douleur* secured the attendance of one of the waiters, who brought him his meals when desired, of which he sparingly partook, passing the time in drinking with a *gout* worthy a disciple of Epicurus, now resigning himself to the arms of Morpheus, again to rush into those of Bacchus, whose votary for the time he had become. The supply exhausted, the empty bottles were sent away; he was shaved and took a bath. Securing a passage he returned home after an absence of two weeks. His haggard looks and soiled linen did not escape the eye of the trim servant that admitted him, who hastened to announce his arrival to his mistress. Mrs. Morris and Emma felt that the time for silence was past. They schooled themselves to meet him, and together descended to the library. Emma, pale as marble and almost as cold, could only press that fond parent's hand in silence, for her heart was crushed, and her spring-day hopes, like the seared and withered leaves of winter, lay quivering at her feet.

Mr. Selwyn stood with his back to the door. As they entered he turned and attempted to take a hand of each. They were withdrawn. Tears of shame and penitence rained from his eyes as he threw himself at their feet.

"Rise, sir!" commanded Mrs. Morris. Her voice trembled, but her manner was firm; "rise up, Mr. Selwyn, and explain

your conduct."

He attempted to speak, but his quivering lips gave forth no sound.

"Oh! Mr. Selwyn, how could you so cruelly deceive us? You must have been addicted to such courses before we knew you. For I cannot suppose these delinquenties the first, and have no reason to believe they will be the last. Your father, too, whom I respected so highly—I must speak plainly, Mr. Selwyn, in justice to my own father, when he sanctioned the engagement, said you were all that the fondest parent could desire. If my suspicions be correct, he must have known his words were false."

"Spare my father, Mrs. Morris; he spoke what he believed to be the truth."

"Then you acknowledge that you are guilty?"

"Yes—No—I have greatly erred, Mrs. Morris, but am not wholly criminal; for I have struggled against temptation. How I have wrestled with the tempter, you can never know." He shuddered as he spoke—great drops of perspiration stood upon his brow and his lips were white as death.

"But Mr. Selwyn, when you sought my daughter's hand, you said nothing of this."

"To have done so would have been to destroy my hopes at once. Emma! Mrs. Morris! will you listen to me, while I go back to the time when I first left Cambridge and entered on my professional career in the City of Washington? Then it was that I became acquainted with some wild young men, attorneys like myself, who, obtaining few briefs, had only the more time to devote to pleasure. We became dissipated; and though perhaps the least so of any, I occasioned profound grief to my family. I promised reformation, again to cause them the most poignant sorrow. During some years, this was my state, when an excess laid me on a bed of sickness. Reason was for a time entirely destroyed. On recovering, my physician—it was the last visit he paid me—addressed me in an impressive manner. His warning words still ring in my ear. They were:—'Young man, if you return to your old courses you are lost! Mark me—body and mind will both be destroyed. I do not say this to alarm you unnecessarily. You possess a fine, nervous organization, that will not bear tampering with; and your only safety is in the total renunciation of stimulating drinks. For you, there is no middle course. You must either forswear the indulgence at once and forever, or make up your mind one day to become the inmate of a lunatic asylum.' I trembled while he spoke, and felt assured of the truth of what he said; but how break through the meshes which custom had drawn around me? He also spoke to my father, who soon found an opportunity of sending me abroad under the auspices of an old friend of my uncle's. This gentleman was of high character and great learning, and was besides, one of the best men I ever knew. He kindly consented, out of regard to my family, to be burdened with me, for I was a wretched burden even to myself. I will pass over months of misery, when the sight of a glass of liquor revived in me an appetite almost too difficult to control, and say nothing of the nervous depression into which I frequently sank, feeling that a fiend was ever at my elbow, urging the guilty cup and waiting to drag me down to unfathomable misery. Through the kind reasoning and tender forbearance of my invaluable friend, I at length recovered; and when he left me in Germany, I had but one engrossing passion—that was, self-improvement. My early love for art revived, and my indulgent parents supplied the means for my long residence in Europe. Soon after I joined my family in Cuba, whether it was the enervating effect of climate, or the absence of congenial employment, I know not, but my old enemy returned, haunting me like a shadow. I was afraid of myself. I seemed beset by a demon that was constantly urging an indulgence that was to be my destruction. This was my state, when returning home from an excursion in the interior, I was introduced to yourself and family. The first glance at Emma decided my destiny. I felt that she was the angel, through whose purity and strength I should be enabled to triumph over the foe that had destroyed my peace."

You blame me, Mrs. Morris, that I did not explain all this to you. I did intend one day, to unburden myself to my sweet wife—perhaps when the image of a little child should plead to the mother's heart for the weakness of its father. The events of the past two months have revived my despair—I was tempted and fell. Yet, cast me not from you. Never again will you behold me in the condition, to which you were once the unwilling witness. Cast me not off without one more trial. I will absent myself for any term you dictate, only suffer me to hope that a victory over myself will be a restoration to your favor and love. O, Emma! my hopes of Heaven depend on your decision. Will you forgive me? Will you trust me?"

His face was bathed in tears as he made this candid confession, and plead with all the eloquence of deep passion. When was ever true eloquence without its influence? Not in this instance—they felt that he was sincere, and Mrs. Morris, placing her handkerchief to her eyes, turned away. Emma, whose gaze had never wandered, as she listened with suspended breath, cast on him the look of a pitying angel, and extended to him her hand. He received it reverently, covering it with kisses.

"Will I forgive you?—will I trust you?"—ah, Mr. Selwyn, will I not? Depend not on a frail mortal like myself, but put your trust in God. Pray to Him for strength to overcome this great temptation, and He will help you.

It was settled that Mr. Selwyn should pass the probation of a year, with his family. What good purpose this was to answer I could never rightly understand, but so it was. His letters reached them punctually. They were filled with repentance for the past, determination for the future, with wretchedness at the separation from his wife, for whom he expressed so much love and admiration, in which no complaints were mingled, that they touched them nearly; and before the expiration of the year, he was invited to return.

He returned, looking both well and happy. There was now, no reserve between them, and manifesting a deep religious sentiment, he united himself to the church, to which Emma a few months previous had been admitted a member. Winter saw them again at the plantation, when Mr. Selwyn joined with heart and soul in all their plans for the improvement of their people. Never had he appeared to such advantage. His look was open and firm, his manner, assured and tranquil; and he became the light of their eyes to both Mrs. Morris and Emma. Christmas approached—a great time on plantations, where the Christmas holidays are religiously observed. Not always in a Christian-like manner, be it understood, but it is claimed by the negro, as his prescriptive right.

It was a lovely day. Mr. Selwyn was unusually joyous, and after assisting in the distribution of Christmas gifts to the scores of negroes who came in to receive them, he declared his intention of making a few calls on some of the neighboring planters.

"Let me see," he said, enumerating the list—"there are—besides Mr. Baker. I saw him yesterday at your brother's, Mrs. Morris, and he appeared to feel really hurt at my not having yet returned his civility."

Mr. Baker lived with true southern hospitality. His house, his table, his servants, were all at the disposal of his friends, and never was he more pleased than when his house was well filled. Both him and his wife were rejoiced to see Mr. Selwyn. He was invited to remain and dine, which he declined doing. Being Christmas, he must join them in a glass of egg-nog. To this he politely responded that he made no use of stimulants, but the refreshment was ordered. It looked a harmless thing enough, as it filled the huge china bowl, above the top of which towered a pyramidal froth, as white and light as the driven snow.

"It is nothing more than custard, eggs and sugar, you know, with a slight dash of brandy," and Mr. Baker filled two glasses, one for himself, the other for Mr. Selwyn.

Again he would have declined, but Mrs. Baker, as she heaped on the top of each

glass the proper amount of foam, declared that as she had made it herself, she should feel quite offended if he did not at least taste it.

"I would not willingly offend a lady," He bowed, smiled, and raised the fatal draught to his lips.

What was it as he did so, that sent a thrill through his frame and almost checked the beatings of his heart? He pronounced it "excellent," complimented her upon her *savoir faire*, and finished the glass.

Some other gentlemen coming in, he was induced before his departure to take a second glass, and he returned home in a state of intoxication. He was forgiven, and again he sinned. The shame of detection over, he seemed to have given himself over to the demon of drink. And now the disease, for disease it was, broke out in full force, and he implored for stimulants. Neither prayers, nor entreaties, could deter him from yielding to the insatiable craving that consumed him—the desire was beyond control. The full amount of wine and liquors the house contained was consumed, without satisfying in the least degree his craving thirst. Fearing that nothing short of personal restraint, would prevent him from seeking the indulgence, wherever it could be found, in great grief and perplexity, Mrs. Morris sent for her brother, Judge C., and besought his advice.

Judge C. was a man simply practical. He did not long deliberate. "If you wish to break him of the habit at once, send for a demijohn of brandy and let him drink his fill."

"O, Liberty!" cried the unfortunate Madam Roland, "how many crimes are committed in thy name!" May we not with equal justice exclaim, O, Ignorance! of how much crime art thou the unconscious parent! In the pride of superior wisdom we speak of the Dark Ages as times that are past and gone. Alas, for our discernment! There needs but a glance at the state of society at large to comprehend the amount of ignorance that still exists. Ignorance of the natural laws, of man's inner self, of the best means for the advancement of fallen humanity, proves that in these days of boasted knowledge, "Let there be light!" is a crowning glory as devoutly to be wished as when the material world lay shrouded in impenetrable gloom. The brandy was sent for, a decanter placed before him, and though eagerly drained, afforded no satisfaction; a constantly recurring impulse urging him to drink till a stupor as of death arrested his hand. All solid food was now rejected; one insane cry constantly arose—"Give me drink!" Pardon me, gentle reader, if I draw a veil over the scenes that now followed. The house was closed; it was denied to visitors, and a gloom as of death hung over all. A suicide was being committed, without knowledge or power to avert the evil. And soon was it accomplished. In three weeks the gates were opened, and Mr. Selwyn, so capable of loving, so gentle and intelligent, so calculated in every way to adorn life, was placed in a drunkard's grave, over which bitter tears were shed than manifold afflictions had yet called forth.

The above is a case of peculiar type, and is one to which many of my readers have doubtless seen a parallel. "I am not a Methuselah," yet I can call to mind nearly a dozen similar instances, where the treatment pursued partook of the same degree of enlightenment, with results equally disastrous. Shall I speak of one who belonged to a family of three brothers, each of them distinguished for high, if not the highest talent? Two of them occupy stations than which none higher on earth need be coveted. He, the eldest and most gifted, for upwards of fifty years exercised his gifts for the benefit of others, receiving as the reward, the respect to which a good man is entitled. Falling into ill-health, he was advised by his physician to take brandy as a tonic. He did so, and was benefited. About this time he removed to the west to fill a station of public trust, carrying with him, if not the disease, the fatal habit the cure for that disease had engendered. Time passed on, and he became the slave to a vice before which his fine mind sank, his character changed. Not all at once did he become

a drunkard—no one becomes that despicable thing at once; but by slow and sure degrees, he fell, the wreck of his former self. For years his faithful wife resolutely endeavored to draw him from the brink of shame and despair. In vain. Heart-broken, she placed within his reach the means for his guilty indulgence, to try the effect. A terrible one, indeed! She sank to the grave without one gleam of hope for that husband's future. He had fallen into a state of complete idiocy, with an unabated thirst for the fatal draught that had made him an object of deep commiseration to his friends and a burden upon two lovely and accomplished daughters.

I called on you to reflect, dear reader, and you have done so. I see by the thoughtful brow, and saddened countenance, that you are thinking of that wife and mother of many years' standing, before whom a barrel of rum was placed by her husband—and she a physician!—with permission to help herself, which she did—out of the world; of that son just entering upon manhood, whose excesses had reduced him to a state of nervous exhaustion, for which he was allowed a fearful amount of stimulus as his daily portion, until death ended the indulgence; of one, a gray-haired sire was compelled to take from his family and place in a lunatic asylum; who, just as confinement and judicious treatment were beginning to have a beneficial effect, was allowed by that fond, though weak parent, to be released from the wholesome restraint, and in consequence, before a month had passed, was picked up in a dying state from the sidewalk. Shall I go on? Ah, no! the picture is too true—the reality too fearful—and what is the remedy?

We leave the question with others; let them look well to the answer.

Pretty Women and Politeness.

A talented lady, who "writes for the papers," speaks thus of city railroad cars: "The seats of the car were all occupied, yet the conductor stopped for me—not wishing to disturb those that were seated, I was intending to stand, but a gentleman up at the far end arose and insisted upon my taking his seat. Being very tired, I thanked him and obeyed. Presently a lady much younger, much prettier, and much better dressed than myself entered the car. No less than four gentlemen arose instantly offering her a seat. She smiled sweetly and unaffectedly, and thanking the gentleman who urged the nearest seat to her, she seated herself with a peculiar grace of manner. She had one of those faces Raphael was always painting—touchingly sweet and expressive. A little after this young beauty had taken her seat, a poor woman, looking very thin and pale, with that care worn, haggard look that poverty, and sorrow, and hard labor always gave, came in. She might have been one of those poor seamstresses who look like slaves and starve for their labor. She was thin and mealy clad, and seemed weak and exhausted. She evidently had no sixpence to throw away, and came in the car not to stand, but to rest while she was helped on her journey. While she was mockingly standing for the moment, none of the gentlemen (?) offering to rise, Raphael's angel, with sweet, reproving eyes, looked on those who had so officiously offered her a seat, and seeing none of them attempt to move, and just as myself was rising to give the poor old lady a seat, she arose and insisted upon the woman taking her seat.—It was all but the work of a moment, and the look of grateful surprise the old woman gave her, and the glance of pity the beautiful girl bestowed on the woman as she yielded her seat, and the evident consternation of the broadcloth individuals, who were manifestly put to shame, all were irresistibly interesting and instructive.—One of these broadcloth wearers, apparently overpowered with confusion, got up and left the car, and Raphael's angel took his vacant seat."

"Bridget, are the eggs boiled?"

"I don't know, sure, I left them to boil by the watch."

"Boil by the watch! what do you mean?"

"Sure didn't you tell me to boil three minutes by the watch and faith I did, for I've laid them all in the skillet together."